

The Keynote

Newsletter of FISTS CW Club

The active chapter of the International Morse Preservation Society



Straight Keys in BELIZE

The Glass Arm DXpedition

September 6-13, 2006

When you have a question about FISTS, go to the source for the correct answer.

Posting a question on a chat room or email reflector may result in a lot of opinions, but your best bet is to ask a FISTS volunteer, look in the reference issue, or on our web page <http://www.fists.org>

Please put the word 'FISTS' somewhere in the title of your email. This will help the volunteer recognize that your email is important and not spam.

For questions about:

**Awards and Certificates contact
Dennis Franklin, K6DF, fistsawards@comcast.net**

**The QSL Bureau contact
Stan Reas, K4UK, k4uk@rev.net**

**Our club call KN0WCW contact
Karl Zuege, KB1DSB, kb1dsb@arrl.net**

**The membership roster, call changes, name changes contact
Ed Hayes, N7CFA, n7cfa@msn.com**

**To get an application or sample Keynote sent to a friend contact
Jim Ranieri, AA9LS, aa9ls@turbotoads.com**

**Web page changes, getting your personal or club webpage linked, etc contact
Webmaster Bill Myers, KK4KF, kk4kf@cox.net**

**Club presentation packets contact
Joe Spencer, KK5NA, kk5na@kk5na.com**

**To change or include your email address on the FISTS email list contact
Kathi Hilton, N0FKA, fistelist@comcast.net (note no "s" in fistelist)**

**Code Buddy volunteers and buddies contact
Nick Yokanovich, K3NY, & The Historical Electronics Museum Amateur Radio Club,
w3hem@arrl.net**

**Sprints contact
Dan Sheperd, N8IE, W8PIG@yahoo.com**

**Get Your Feet Wet Weekend and G3ZQS Memorial Straight Key Contest contact
Lee Hallin, N7NU, hallinl@lanecc.edu**

All other questions, including supplies, tapes for the blind, address changes, general membership questions and articles for the Keynote contact Nancy Kott WZ8C, nancy@tir.com; PO Box 47, Hadley MI 48440, phone 810-797-2033, fax 810-797-5808.

FISTS CW CLUB

THE INTERNATIONAL MORSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

NORTH AMERICAN MEMO

EDITOR:

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Hi FISTS! What a hectic summer this has been for me. The time just flew by. The Glass Arm DXpedition will be history by the time you read this. I hope we got you in the log. I can't wait to try out the two straight keys that Marshall Emm's Morse Express and GHD key company are providing. Cal, V31EA, has tried them both and says they are remarkable. I'll let you know! I'm also taking a special "Dark Horse" edition of Dave Ingram's (K4TWJ #1435) Wild Woody key - it's made from a clothespin and painted gold with a black wooden base- ooh!

We have some of the commemorative Glass Arm t-shirts left - they are sand colored with a toucan sitting on the FISTS straight key logo. There is a color photo of it on the web page <http://www.fists.org>. And the black and white graphic is on the cover of this Keynote. Very snazzy! They're \$16 - size M-3X postpaid. Paypal to nancy@tir.com, or checks to Nancy WZ8C Box 807, Hadley MI 48440.

Don't forget to send in your G3ZQS Memorial Contest logs as well as your Get Your Feet Wet Weekend logs to Lee Hallin - N7NU, hallinl@lanecc.edu. Lee recently broke his ankle in three places, so if he is a bit slow in answering your emails, please be patient!

The Sprint is coming up the 2nd week in October - same time as always 1700Z-2100Z. Everyone is welcome, I hope this Keynote gets to you in time to remind you about it, but it has been mentioned in previous issues, as well as been happening for about a decade now, so it shouldn't catch you unaware.

With summertime over and outdoor activities slowing down, and propagation improving, now is an excellent time to volunteer for the Code Buddy program. I get quite a few letters from anxious folks looking for a Code Buddy, and wondering why they haven't been matched up with anyone, but the truth of the matter is there aren't a whole lot of people who have volunteered to Elmer people. That is a darned shame!!

If you can spare an hour a week to help out a fellow ham, please drop Nick K3YN and the Historic Electronics Museum Radio Club (the club that helps Nick with the Code Buddy managing) an email at w3hem@arrl.net and volunteer to get on the air with someone while they make their first QSO or ten. You may not remember how intimidating it is to get on the air the first few times, but it is very nerve wracking for some people and a friendly fist on the other end of the QSO can make all the difference in the world.

If you are a person WANTING to GET a Code Buddy and haven't heard from Nick, please write him again. We had some problems with the web page and mail sent to him was going off into the ozone and not getting to him, but not bouncing back either. So it looked like your mail was being delivered but it wasn't. If you would be happy with another new-to-CW person to work with instead of an experienced op, let him know. It may be faster to set you up with a Practice Buddy. 73
88 Nancy WZ8C/V31AN

Welcome to the New FISTS

FISTS #callsign				Name		State	Sponsor
12412	KG6CGV	RICH	CA	12462	K5HLZ	BOB	TX
12413	KE0QM	Dennis	KS	12463	WB5IUU	BOB	TX WZ8C
12414	K7TUC	BOB	WA	12464	KB5GOE	SUE	TX WB5IUU
12415	W7TAX	DAVE	WA	12465	W4FXI	Robert	VA WB2FXK
12416	WA2NEQ	BOB	NJ K1LOG	12466	KA9GEU	DAVID	IL
12417	KC2DRA	BOB	PR	12467	W0LK	Bob	AR
12418	NE9ET	George	IL W9EM	12468	WB2KKI	MIKE	PA
12419	KD8DKS	BOB	MI W8LSV	12469	WA5VFA	RON	TX
12420	KD7TAX	Amelia	OR	12470	W2QBC	LEN	NY NS2H
12421	KG6MPH	PETE	CA	12471	KB1MNO	JOHN	MA W7RVR
12422	K7JBQ	BILL	CA	12472	WE3V	JOHN	RI
12423	KA8CLN	KEN	MI	12473	KF4CNM	GARY	GA
12424	KX5X	Archie	WI	12474	KG6WPF	JOHN	CA
12425	W0ILO	Red River Radio Amateurs	ND W0ZQJ	12476	KC2OBG	JEFF	NY
12426	W5RKL	Michael	OK	12477	KA2SEY	PHIL	NJ
12427	KN8C	John	OH	12478	KC0TBO	BILL	NE
12428	WB4MNK	Art	FL	12479	KC0IFQ	Dennis	KS
12429	NC6Q	BOB	CA	12480	WK4W	JIM	VA
12430	KE7FHO	JERRY	WA	12481	K8GTQ	Richard	MI WB2FXK
12431	WD8ICX	Gary	OH KD8JN/WB8OWM	12482	K5YPP	BOBBY	TX KD5JWC
12432	KD7HCU	TED	WA	12483	K3KN	JOSEPH	MD
12433	KB7SY	CHUCK	WA	12484	K0IC	RON	IA
12434	AD5JZ	STEVE	TX WB2FXK	12485	W1CG	CHAS	RI
12435	N4MIR	FRANK	FL	12486	KE5AL	JIM	TX
12436	WA4PWA	BOB	AL	12487	W6YR	JOE	CA
12437	K4BBE	ELWYNN	GA	12488	K0GUZ	STEVE	CO KA8HFN
12438	A14RB	RANDY	FL	12489	KB1KYN	ANDY	MA N4DU
12439	KB1KRS	HYRUM	MA	12490	KF9MI	Torben	IL
12440	W1XP	ROBERT	MA	12491	K5NOW	HAL	AR
12441	KD5MFC	Thomas	TX	12492	W8OLO	BOB	OH
12442	K6BN	Bill	CA	12493	WB4BBF	Randall	VA
12443	K14QCX	Matthew	TN	12494	AA4TB	Tommy	SC
12444	N0LX	JAKE	CO	12495	W0NG	BILL	CO
12445	N0ZSN	JAMES	CO	12496	WA8ADA	GARY	OH ZL2SWR
12446	N5BUD	BUDDY	LA	12497	KG9O	KEN	IN AA9LS
12447	WB2SSB	Joseph	NY	12498	KA5OAI	SAM	TX
12448	KG4W	ED	VA K4BQZ	12499	N3HJV	ROBERT	PA
12449	AG0A	GALEN	CO W0RRA	*** the 12500-12599 number block is in use by the UK ***			
12450	W1PAZ	Wage Peace!	Radio Group VT WB2MIC	12601	KC00XE	JOHN	CO
12451	AB5X	BOB	TX KD0CA	12602	A14QR	STEVE	AL
12452	N0CKT	ED	MO	12603	AD5SO	GREGG	TX
12453	W6JTK	JOHN	CA	12604	K3KKA	BOB	FL WB2FXK
12454	KG4ZGA	Jeff	VA	12605	VA3BOW	DON	ONT KA3NZR
12455	WB4AEG	HAL	GA KE4I	12606	WA6FYD	JACK	CA
12456	K14PII	Michael	GA	12607	N3VF	RON	VA NU4I
12457	KG8FX	JOHN	MI	12608	K1UQE	ED	CT
12458	K5DLO	DON	OK	12609	W7GAM	Wilson	FL
12460	WB0CJB	PAUL	IN	12610	KJ5CC	DAN	AR
12461	K5EK	KEN	VA KG4YLZ	12611	KE4ICS	MIKE	TN
				12612	K14DWB	JIM	VA
				12613	AC4QZ	PAUL	TN
				12614	N4BJ	BOB	TN K14KGU
				12615	W4CSN	SCOTT	VA K14KGU
				12616	K14ECN	Michael	TN K14KGU

FISTS #callsign	Name	State	Sponsor
12617 K14AAQ	NANCY	VA	K14KGU
12618 K14AAP	IVAN	VA	
12619 K2YSR	JIM	TN	
12620 W1FDJ	DON	CT	
12621 K0THI	TOM	IA	
12622 AA8P	MATT	KY	
12623 W5FIH	J.H.	OK	
12624 KC0NGA	FRED	MO	WB8NMK
12626 N3BW	George	NC	
12627 N5CFM	SKIP	OK	K5DLE
12628 W6GMU	PAUL	CA	
12629 KC0UZA	MIKE	MO	
12630 AC7FA	DON	WA	
12631 W0ZL	BILL	KS	

First Grand Daughter for UK Membership Manager and Bureau Manager

Chuck and Mandy write: Our first grand daughter Bethan was born this morning, September 3rd 9.25am 6lbs 12oz at home, to Amanda our daughter and partner Chris. Mother and baby doing very well. *Congrats to all!*

John Underwood W8GAC, Silent Key

John Underwood W8GAC, #4043, became a Silent Key January 23, 2006. His wife, Loueva, wrote to tell me John enjoyed FISTS and the Keynote.

Gene Nailon, K5DLE, Silent Key

There is a light that will shine no more in an old hamshack located in Logan County tonight. You will not see the glimmer of the sweep tubes in an old 101E glowing any more; nor the sweet music of a master brass pounder singing over the airwaves; a beautiful sound that we have grown to know and love for over half a century. Gene Nailon, K5DLE, dedicated most of his life to Ham Radio and for the last 25 years, QCWA was his sole passion. A "recruitaholic" he proudly called himself and to many, he was more than just a friend. He was their mentor and so much more. Amateur Radio has lost a true and faithful friend; for he has entered into the time honored realm of a Silent Key, as so many others before us have gone into that great station in the sky. That spiritual station not built with hands, eternal in the heavens. 73 and farewell to you OM, you will surely be missed by all. And from me, you will always be my brother and best friend. Skip N5CFM

Tom Dolph, KG9LZ, Silent Key

Tom Dolph, KG9LZ is now a Silent Key. Tom was a valued member of the Green River Valley ARS and a very active FISTS member. He was instrumental in GRVARS becoming a FISTS Club and always promoted the various FISTS activities at club meetings.

Thomas was born Jan. 21, 1946, in Rock Island, and a chemistry professor at Scott Community College. Online condolences may be expressed to Thomas's family by visiting his obituary at www.esterdahlmortuary.com. Pete, NN9K

Photopages

I hope you noticed the photos in Issue 5 are in color. I'm going to add more color photos to upcoming Keynotes. There isn't time to do it for this one - the trip to Belize really cut into my spare time this month, not to mention the two September contests and then the Sprint in October. ***I still haven't gotten out the certificates from the 2005 Get Your Feet Wet Weekend - if anyone wants to make the certs for this year, please don't be shy. Contact me or Lee Hallin.***

The printer left out a page from the photopage roster in Issue 5 so I'm reprinting it next month. Please send in your photo so we can keep adding more pages to the photopages booklet. Photo #25 on page 38 should be WB4T, not WB4AT. Sorry, Roger!

From the Mailbag

A QSO with K3WWP

I enjoy FISTS very much. I especially am enjoying John K3WWP QRP section. I have gotten into kit building and am working QRP exclusively right now. I ran into John on the air and had a very nice QSO with him. It was like meeting a celebrity. Hi Hi. It made my day!!! 73! and Thanks! Ivin Flint W9ILF FISTS# 11745

Question of the Month

I'm going to put this one out to the experts reading this...send in your replies (via email to nancy@tir.com is fine) and I'll put them in an upcoming Keynote.

I'm new to CW and with the help of the FISTS club, I am enjoying it very much. However, I am having problems figuring out which frequency to use to make contact with someone calling CQ? When I listen to CW QSO's I hear both stations off-frequency from one another. Some stations are off by many Hz, others are off only a few Hz, and a few are on the same frequency, but there never seems to be a consistency in separation of the two stations. I'm fortunate that my rig has an automatic CW tune feature, but this does not always work for slow CW. I need to know how to properly tune to a station calling CQ.

QCWA NET - All Welcome!

The Michigan Chapter of the QCWA (Quarter Century Wireless Association) holds a CW net on Saturday evening at 8:00 pm local time on 3.535+/- depending on conditions. It is "easy going" net and they welcome all visitors. This is a great way to improve CW skills. They work with all speeds, so don't be bashful. The average speed is about 12-15 wpm, but Net Control will slow down to whatever is necessary. Join in when you can. (from Jim W8JFB)

Need an Elmer in the 3rd Call District?

I am looking for an heir to carry on my tradition of all three of these aspects in ham radio...

I would like to give my TenTec Scout QRP/CW Scout @ 3w, my super dooper DX skywire and, if possible, my 60 year old call sign.

I would be delighted if someone in the Third Call District would step forward. Thank you George W3MWY #7902 w3mwy@comcast.net

Too Easy?

Thanks to FISTS for trying to keep CW going and for trying to keep CW in the license testing. I am not happy with the ARRL and FCC.

If the USA would give me 25 5-watt CW transceivers and 25 solar panels and 25 batteries, I would teach 25 Guards CW. I would have hams copying on 25 different frequencies and 25 cities can be in touch - no one on top of another. But it would be too easy. and the government can't use something old or easy. 25 frequencies on the bottom of 40 meters during the day and 25 frequencies on the bottom of 80 at night. Is it just too easy? CW forever, Ewan N4LMI

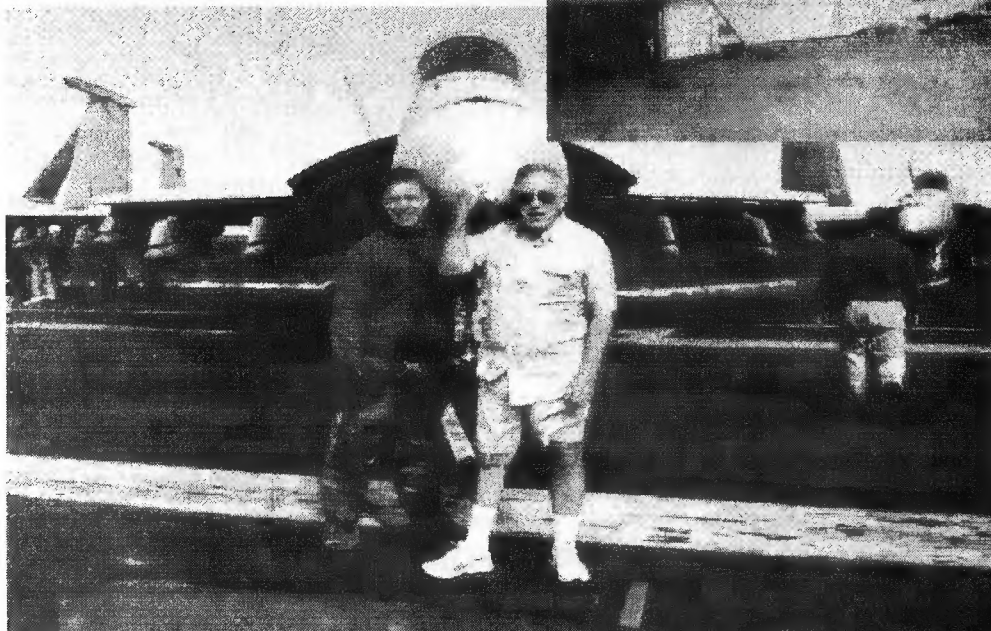
For Sale or Trade

Kenwood Triband handheld (TH-F6) for sale or trade. I would like to have 6 meters instead of 220. Contact KG2QT Tom Boyle, 200 Sedgwick Ave, Yonkers NY 10705

We even have "Fists" aboard the USS Ronald Reagan CVN76. That is the name of a Attack Fighter Squadron 25. I was invited to do the Tiger Cruise from Pearl Harbor Hawaii to San Diego on June 28 to July 6th. What a blast. My son is an Aviation Ordnanceman in Attack Squadron 25, the "Fighting Redcocks".

73 Frank Hickam #2411

"FIST" on the USS Ronald Reagan CVN76



KA3IXF APARTMENT DWELLERS ANTENNA

Bill Parker KA3IXF #8547

Moving from a house after many years of being active with a 5-band vertical and my Kenwood TS-940AT to an apartment, it is very easy to get discouraged. I have been inactive due to little or no hope of putting out a good signal. Recently with the birth of Elecraft and the K2/100, my interest was peaking on a high level, similar to when I was a Novice. It was like Heathkit was back in business. That warm fuzzy feeling was back, the one I had when I use to sit in front of my Galaxy on a cold winters night and be warmed by the heat coming off of my finals.

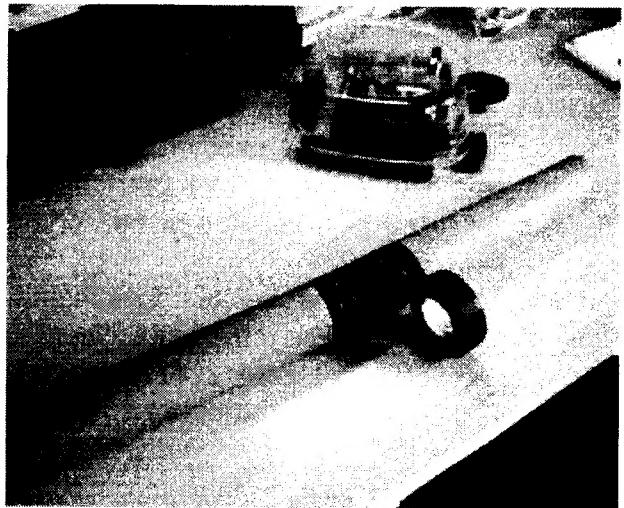
I had looked through many publications trying to come up with a "ready to buy" solution. There were many indoor antennas and an antenna that connected to the windowsill but protruded straight out like a vertical. None of these would do, as I personally went to my apartment rental office and tried to explain Amateur Radio and the need for an antenna, but they were not buying it.

Approximately eight years ago in the September 1998 QST, I wrote a small story about an antenna I designed for an apartment and had some luck with, however at that time, I had a balcony. The apartment that I now live in has no balcony, although I lived on the third or top floor, and the possibility of having an outdoor an-

tenna seemed hopeless, and I may have to settle for one of those indoor antennas.

After purchasing my K2/100, and having many hours of fun building this incredible radio, along with a little help from Alan Wilcox, at Wilcox Engineering, (alan@wilcoxengineering.com), up in Williamsport, PA, it was time to decide on an antenna.

After spending those 1,000 dollars on the K2/100, and not having a whole lot of money leftover for an antenna, HI! I thought about the idea that I had back in 1998. After debating with my XYL about how much more money I would be spending on my small set up, I took two cardboard tubes from a couple of rolls of Christmas wrapping paper, I wrapped it completely in black electrical tape, giving it some strength and a little weatherproofing.



KA3IXF Antenna - Step 1-wrapping tape around the tube

Our rear bedroom in the apartment has a double window, similar to a picture window with a little width to it. I set the cardboard tube on the windowsill and cut it to fit snug in between the cut out for the window.

With some wire and feedline, I created a limited space G5RV for 10 thru 40 meters. These are also available ready-made commercially. I placed the feed line in the middle of the tube, and secured it to the tube with black electrical tape. I then began to wrap the antenna wire around the tube, being careful not to allow the turns to touch each other. I used heavy-duty insulated copper wire for each side of the antenna. I left about a half of an inch space between each turn. I felt as though I was wrapping one of those Elecraft toroids again.

After making what appeared to be a big resistor with a feed line coming out the middle, I wrapped it all up in heavy-duty tape, weather

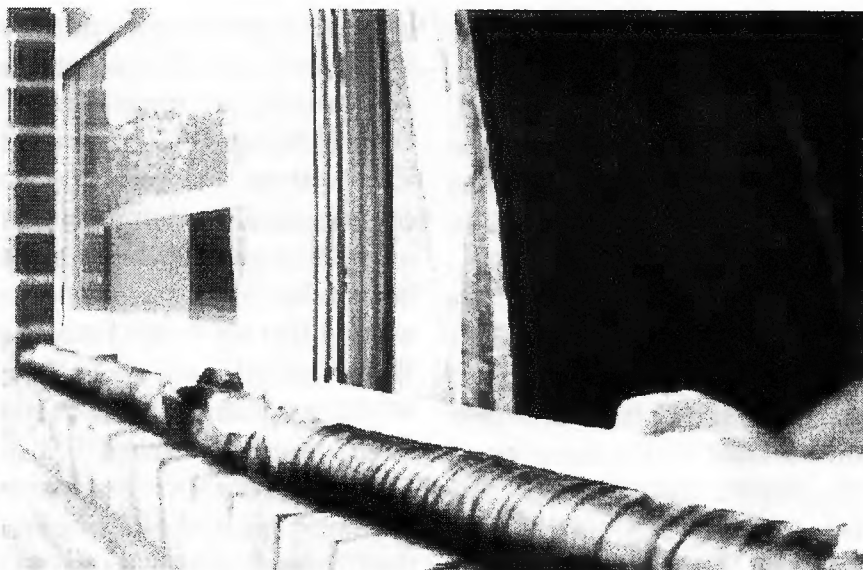
proofing it and adding a little bit of camouflage, depending on the color of your apartment building.

I securely placed it on my windowsill and fed the feed line into my MFJ tuner.

I was able to tune up on 10 thru 40 meters on the CW portions of the bands, with little or no reflected power; the SWR was perfect. Being a CW-only operator, I don't know how this antenna will do on the phone portions of the bands.

I began working 40 meters and having some luck with the K2 at 15 watts, working up and down the east coast. Not being satisfied, I added the KPA 100 to my K2. My contacts increased 100 %, and to my surprise I began to work DX again. I worked Cyprus Island on 14.027. I was running approximately 50 to 75 watts out. I did not want any TVI issues in the apartment complex.

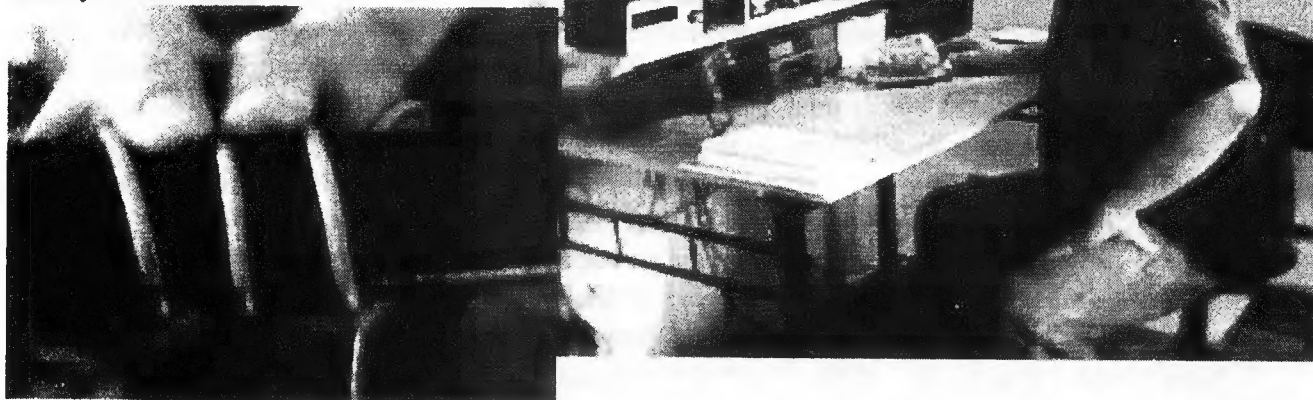
To my amazement this antenna has performed flawlessly. The overall cost of The KA3IXF Apartment Dwellers Antenna, is a hefty 20.00 dollars.



KA3IXF Ant On Window Sill

Of course, the longer the tube can be and the larger the tube can be, without attracting too much attention, the better the performance. Individual sizes will vary on the band portions you wish to work.

I am not claiming this antenna to be the next big thing in amateur radio, however, for me it was this antenna or nothing and to my surprise along with using the excellent overall features of the Elecraft K2/100, this antenna keeps KA3IXF on the air, answering your CQs on 40 and 20 meters, from a third floor apartment in rare "Delaware".



KA3IXF Antenna Step 2 - wrapping the wire around the tube..

QRP With K3WWP

- Column # 76 -

I received some more response to my column about the Internet in this copy of an email reflector posting that was sent to me.

"Enough. Following this thread I've compiled a list of ops should I hear on the bands, I might just ignore because of their intolerance of anything but a myoptic view of perfection. The lids, poor fists and other retrobates I'll gladly engage in a QSO and maybe we'll converse on

matters that might be of some interest. We might even advance the art of CW.

I think K3WWP's advice in a recent 'Keynote' is good advice. Enjoy your 'web' communication, as I think after 3 months of wading through this drivel I'm going QRT on (xxxxx - Internet mail list). 73 (xxxxx - call letters)"

When I mentioned to the poster I was going to use this material in my column, I received the following from him. "I wouldn't want this to escalate any, so if you can keep the party's call signs and the list anonymous it would be appreciated. I just got frustrated, as did another who quit the list, with the less than constructive criticism of their fellow CW afficionados. Thanks in advance for your courtesies." Glad to oblige. That is why the 'xxxxx' in his post.

Now since I don't subscribe to any email reflectors, I kind of have to guess what was

going on. It seems to me that there must have been a thread on this certain reflector flaming "poor" CW ops by some self-appointed CW hotshots. The poster, rightfully so, got fed up with this kind of mindless garbage and dropped his membership in the reflector as a result. He also made a list of the flamers so he could avoid them on the air. It seems at least one other subscriber also quit the list.

Isn't it interesting that we don't hear this kind of flaming on the CW bands, but only on email lists or chat rooms. Those forms of communication seem to bring out the worst in folks while CW brings out the best.

Instead of flaming "poor" CW ops, we all should be willing to help them out in any way that we can. Never refuse to work someone just because their CW may be a little "sloppy". You have no way of knowing why the person's CW is "sloppy". You could be working someone recovering from a stroke, for example. They are doing their best to send good CW, but the body just doesn't work quite as well as it used to. That's just one example, but there are many other good reasons why someone's code may be less than perfect. Remember the large majority of us CW ops are getting up in years now.

Don't deprive that stroke victim nor anyone else of their enjoyment of the wonderful mode of CW just because their code is not like perfect machine-sent code. Do your best to copy them and don't be afraid to ask for repeats if needed. You may just be

the one who gives an untold amount of pleasure to a ham who really needs it at the moment. CW may be just about the only chance they get to communicate with their fellow human beings.

I think the feedback I am getting from the Internet column shows that I was pretty much right on in what I said, and I'm glad that others are changing their Internet habits and spending less time in chat rooms and mail lists and more time on CW again.

I had planned to finish out this column with a talk on QRP at the sunspot minimum, but I'll postpone that to the next column to bring you some NAQCC news instead.

We at NAQCC have obtained a special 1X1 callsign - N3A. We plan to use this during the second half of October to celebrate the second anniversary of the club. Details will be posted on the club web site as club president KB3LFC comes up with them.

Also the NAQCC has come up with a new project we call the WAS Bear Hunt. It's being run by Ron, K5DUZ. It is an attempt to help QRPers complete their NAQCC QRP WAS Award or to help them with any other awards that require working USA states.

Basically it works like this. Each week two of our members will put their states on the air at times and frequencies determined by them and approved by Ron. One will be a 'rare' state and the other a 'common' state. Frequencies and times will be an-

nounced in advance on the club web site so those needing the states can make plans to be there to try to work them. It's not a contest, but QSO's will be brief to allow as many as possible to work the state.

Of course, everyone's definition of a 'rare' state is different, so there naturally will be some disagreement here. Ron is trying to use as broad a definition of a 'rare' state as possible. We're basing it on many different criteria, and may even have a survey of members to see which states are the most needed.

Each station who puts his state on the air as described above is called a 'Bear'. We are also adapting our awards program to include a new award for working 'Bears' and adding an endorsement to our WAS award for working states via the 'Bear' route.

I'm not going to re-invent the wheel and give all the details here since they are on the web site, but I hope this gets you interested enough to go to the site at <http://www.arm-tek.net/~yoel/> and check things out.

And finally in this column, I've started a diary on my web site with daily entries dealing not only with my ham activities, but other matters as well. It could be called a 'blog' except for the fact that I never liked the sound of that term. It has been getting some good response after a couple months now. However as with other Internet matters I don't want you to spend an inordinate amount of time reading it rather than using CW on the air, but you may find something of interest there.

If you want to contact me or the NAQCC, simply do an MSN or Windows Live search for K3WWP or NAQCC. Till next time, 73.

The North American QRP CW club will host a special events station from 0001 Zulu Oct. 16 through 2359 Zulu Oct. 31 to commemorate the club's second anniversary. the NAQCC now has more than 1,500 members and is still growing. The club call for this special event will be N3A. A certificate will be sent to all who send an 8 1/2 X 11 SASE to: John Shannon K3WWP 478 East High St.

Kittanning, PA 16201

or:

Tom Mitchell KB3LFC

RD6 Box 122A

Kittanning, PA 16201

Accuracy Transcends Speed on Swains Island

As one of the two CW operators at KH8SI SWAINS ISLAND; I hope every FISTS member appreciated the CW operation.

One of the operators in Montenegro at the start was running at 60 wpm or so and spending more time on repeats and fills than QSO. We didn't make that mistake on Swains Island.

When I had a keyer problem, (the keyer would not reset MAX SPEED) on 30m CW, everything I sent was at 18 wpm. NO FILLS, NO ERRORS and NO REPEATS for hours.

I tried to copy the FASTEST guys first! So 40+ wpm copied, "XX#YYY de KH8SI 5NN" sent the "TU" when he sent his RST.

ACCURACY TRANSCENDS SPEED works. More QSO per hour, more guys in the log.

I hope you got KH8SI during our Jul/Aug 2006 Expedition. We ran CW on 20, 30 and 160 meters. Tets AH7C ran on 160 CW while John K1ER ran on 30 CW. The night before John ran 20 CW while Tets ran on 30 CW.

We had a computer failure so I had to use paper logs. COPY, WRITE, QSO, REPEAT!

DXCC #337 if you are in the log. No FISTS number for KH8SI but you may have worked a member. 73 John K1ER #11212

Worst Fist I Ever Heard

Slow learner that I am, my serious attempt to learn CW began in 1968. After that inauspicious beginning, there was a lapse of some 30 years. Then, with retirement came the leisure to try again, and this time it worked -- modestly.

October, 1968, found me in Viet Nam, serving as Chaplain of the 3rd Battalion of the 47th Infantry Division. My wife Anne had sent me, per my request, a code oscillator and key. The key is inexpensive but well-made copy of the familiar Triumph style. I kept this gear on a table next to my "bed" in a bunkered hooch, which was my office and quarters. Having no such things as jacks, plugs or switches, the system was always hard-wired and ready for a few minutes practice.

I always slept rather lightly over there, and late one night I was suddenly awakened. This time it was not by in-coming lead, but by the sound of my oscillator. My first immediate thought was that my hooch-mate has harassing me. Then I recalled that he had been wounded and medically evacuated a day or two before. Curious, I quietly reached for my ever-present flashlight, rolled into position and shined it on the key -- and about six large rats cavorting on it. Apparently, they liked the fun of making the oscillator sound!

That key and oscillator now sit in my shack. When I eventually get up the nerve, I will attempt my first CW contact. You can bet I'll use that same old key, the one I call my "rat key".

The moral? If you hear lousy -- really lousy -- CW being sent, it may be rats on a key...or it could just be KB3KBC!

Chaplain (Brigadier General/Virginia) R.I. Stinson KB3KBC

.....

I found this buried under a really really old pile of paper, and don't know if it ever made it into the newsletter; so here it is - hope Jennifer sees it!- WZ8C

Oct 31, 1997

My daughter, Jennifer, age 20 (in 1997) and I have for many years had an ongoing war of who can get 'one up' on the other. After many yeras of attempts, she finally was able to sneak one in on me.

My years is the proberbial Antenna Farm. I have for many years experimented with one wire antenna or another. At present I have 5 antennas in the air and have had more.

This last weekend I was putting up a new vertical and Jennifer wandered out where I was working and appeared to be interested in what was being accomplished. She stood there for a few minutes and watched very carefully hile I was putting in a series of radials

into the ground.

Then she started grinning from ear to ear. After a brief pause she wiped off the grin and put on her best poker face. Then using a very sweet inquisitive voice asked me, "Dad, are you trying to grow some new antennas or did you just run out of space to hang them up? Do you relaly need more antennas so badly you have to bury them in the ground?"

My reply was simply, "Go away or dig."

(If you print the story, I will see that she reads it and has gained at least one point.)

Joe Owiklinski N2QZQ.

Having a Code Class?
Want to give a friend a helpful nudge?
Want to get your speed up?

Get a FREE K7QO Code Course CD, courtesy of FISTS.
Send an SASE big enough to hold a CD to Nancy WZ8C at PO Box 47, Hadley MI 48440.
IT WORKS, but you have to. too. But, it's just listening... how hard can that be?? Thousands have done it, you can too.

Be Proud to be a KNOW CODE Ham.

Books on CD will be coming soon!
Watch the web page for updates - I'll send out a mass emailing, too, so contact Kathi fistelist@comcast.net (no 's' after fist) to make sure we have your email address)

Spring Sprint Results

Hello fellow FISTS!

Conditions this Sprints seemed to be a mixed bag of good to poor. A lot of stations reported local storms and high QRN. Good to see first timers and new FISTS members joining us in the Sprints.

73 Dan, N8IE FISTS #4985 Sprint Manager

QRO Category

Call	Name	FISTS#	State	Score
W8EQA/7	Daniel	2469	UT	22698
K7NM	Lee	8233	UT	22554
K4IA	Buck	6702	VA	22400
N5DY	Jack	11105	OK	16170
W8YRB	Robert	7436	KS	15948
K8CI	Dick	5270	CT	14292
WB0PYF	Ray	7986	MO	13932
K4OSO	Milt	11383	VA	13160
WE9N	John	8069	IN	11795
KB6NU	Dan	9342	MI	10556
W4KPG	Eric	10774	FL	9867
W9LHG	John	9464	MN	9423
W9IL	Louis	11187	IL	8897
WA0KZL	Tex	8092	IA	7479
K8IJ	Chas	8096	KY	7337
W4YE	Leland	3929	VA	7200
KS0M	Dick	3067	MO	6682
KE9GM	Gregory	6920	IN	5773
WA2BQI	Bud	2009	NY	5174
N2LQ	Ken	10547	NY	4848
W7GVE	Ed	12077	AZ	4080
WB0B	Larry	2916	IA	3887
K8VFR	Rosemarie	5602	MI	3515
K2NPN	Phil	1988	NY	3420
K9JWI	Clyde	3051	CT	3200
K9XL	Ray	8469	IL	2850
KD5MJJ	Hank	8180	TX	2720
KI0J	Al	11905	CO	2700
HP1AC	Cam	4319	PANAMA	2550
KI8U	Dennis	8657	ON	2470
K0CCM	Michael	12193	NM	2329
KI8DU	Roger	5378	WV	2244
W3NGO	Dick	4016	PA	2160
W9SJW	John	10004	IL	2112
W7RCK	Rocky	11018	OR	1955
KG6TWU	Ron	10990	CA	1650
AA5CH	Brad	8133	AR	1610
KA8MPT	John	9552	OH	1596
ND4U	Dennis	8613	TN	1552
K1ESE	John	10466	ME	1400
N6SUZ	Tim	11694	CA	1300
WG7Y	Robert	11830	WY	1260
W8IJ	David	3825	PA	1190
KJ1D	Don	11561	NH	1170
N7EIE	Leroy	9926	WA	1080
KR1B	Robert	3442	ME	1020

AA3II	Jerry	9746	PA	975
W1TPB	Ted	12192	MA	960
WB8RFB	John	6844	IL	700
K3PRY	Chuck	3634	FL	660
W5TB	Doc	5365	TX	650
K16OY	Lee	5320	CA	650
WA9YYF	Edwin	4921	IL	440
K4UK/8	Stan	2934	OH	360
KU8T	Tom	10163	IN	360
K5JJ	John	11806	OK	350
AD5VC	Dana	12296	LA	280
JK7UST	Sugi	N/A	JAPAN	175
KG9HG	Curtis	11820	IN	80
K4UK/3	Stan	2934	PA	80
AK7O	Jack	5019	UT	30

Club Category

Call	Club	FISTS#	ST	Score
W8EOC	Medina 2 Meter Group	10250	OH	29216
KN0WCW/2	FISTS Club	10000	NJ	16695
W4EFF	FISTS Club OF North Carolina	9700	NC	14157
W5KL	QCWA Chapter #202	6780	VA	6160
W1AEC	South Eastern Mass ARA	10555	Ma	4554
W2ZJ	ARA Of The Southern Tier, Inc.	11000	NY	1755
N5FFF	Red Sticks FISTS Club	9250	LA	1500
N4ENC	Eastern NC CW Club	10260	NC	650

QRP Category

Call	Name	FISTS#	State	Score
W5KDJ	Wayne	10060	TX	11280
K4KO	Greg	10584	TN	6534
N0LY	Jonas	N/A	MO	5875
W0UY	Tom	8632	KS	5642
N3RSD	Frank	2411	DE	3726
K4YKI	Norman	2166	KY	3009
W4XJ	Randy	11762	VA	2380
W0UFO	Mert	3823	MN	2080
N2AWE	David	11630	IA	1870
KB3CVO	Thomas	8110	PA	1430
W9UQB	Mike	3687	AZ	1196
KD2MX	Paul	12042	NJ	1105
KB3AAG	Frank	10915	PA	455
NG0K	Douglas	11857	NE	440
KC9AQD	Phil	10743	WI	400
K8JV	Jim	2372	MI	320
NG6X	David	719	CA	280

Sprint Soapbox

Bud, WA2BQL, NY FISTS #2009: Lots of FISTS! Seemed great 20m opened up for a change! Also gave me my finishing touch for the million point award! Hope next one is as good!

Tom, KU8T, IN FISTS #10163: Only could work last 15 minutes of the contest, was lots of fun.

Tim, N6SUZ, CA: My first FISTS Sprint. I won't want to miss any more.

Phil, KC9AQD, WI FISTS #10743: Looking forward to Summer Sprint. Thanks for an enjoyable contest.

ARA of the Souther Tier, Inc, W2ZJ, NY (Jack, WB2FXK op) FISTS #11000: Couple storms moved thru wid lots of fire works, so down for a bit. Did not seem so crowded this May. Everyone moved right along, no gabbing. Forgot ran club W2ZJ so maybe lot not know me. More work making this out than op all afternoon HI.

Rosemarie, K8VFR, MI FISTS #5602: 40 meter only band open with lots of static due to rain storms! Fun any how!

Stan, K4UK/3 and K4UK/8, PA and OH FISTS #2934: Ran mobile in the Mid-Atlantic QSO Party, so only made a few contacts in the FISTS Sprint. Operated from both PA and OH. Conditions were fair. But did have a lot of rain during the Sprint. Nothing heard on 15 or 10 meters.

Ted, W1TPB, MA FISTS #12192: I enjoyed my first Sprint. I will be in the next one.

Tex, WA0KZL, IA FISTS #8092: My first Sprint ever and rather enjoyed it. I'm not a real contester by any means but it doesn't take long to get into the "swing of things" once the ball gets rolling. I had fun and will do it again!

Dick, W3NGO, PA FISTS #4016: Am not a contester but enjoy the Sprints.

Michael, K0CCM, NM FISTS #12193: My first Sprint! Great format - poor propagation.

Larry, WB0B, IA FISTS #2916: It was a special day! The first half of the Sprint I spent at a formal military retirement ceremony for a man who spent 33 year in service to our country with the U.S. Navy. Only active the last few hours of the Sprint, making QSO's with friends who enjoy using the code. It was a very special day.

Gregory, KE9GM, IN FISTS #6920: I had a very good time on this contest. My first time running a bug J37 for four hours. Conditions vry good on 40M, lots of new FISTS numbers.

Dennis, ND4U, TN FISTS #8613: A fun event. Welcome new members. Thank you to everyone keeping Morse Code alive.

Frank, KB3AAG, PA FISTS #10915: My score is going down but still the most fun you can have with

your clothes on.Oh well I save someone else from being last.

Daniel, W8EQA/7, UT FISTS #2469:After 3 plus years working weekends it's nice to be able to contest again!

Ron, WB1HGA, MA FISTS #10555:We had a good time & relaxed during the contest, sharing experiences and such. A problem developed on the 40 meter station so we were limited to only 12 QSO's. We ended up using 2 K1's. This worked out well. This arrangement is what we will do next time.

Sugi, JU7UST, Japan FISTS #7178: Dear OM, Thank you for the nice contest. I enjoyed to talk with NA fists members. But I felt little difficulty. I was not able to take the time because Japan was midnight and I was so sleepy. K7FFF/Dan said that I was a 1st DX station. And another station said I was a 1st DX station, too.I think The Spring SPRINT should run from 1700 UTC to 2359 or 2459 UTC on Second Saturday in May. If the time of the SPRINT is longer, other stations of Fists East Asia will take part in it.

John, K1ESE, ME FISTS #10466:Good contest and activity. Couldn't operate the whole time, but sure had fun.

Greg, K4KO, TN FISTS #10584: Elecraft K1 @ 5W, dipole antennas at 70'

Lee, K7NM, UT FISTS #8233: This Sprint seemed to bring out a lot of new members. It was great to hear a lot of guys with the higher numbers mixed in with the older stations. The only suggestion I might offer is for stations to listen a few minutes on a frequency before transmitting. Since close in stations can't be heard on 20m, sometimes a quick listen is insufficient because the close in station is transmitting. Overall it was a great time. Thanks to Dan Shepherd, N8IE, for his great work putting these on!!!

Richard, K8CI, OH FISTS #5270: Fair amount of QSB but still a nice sprint.

Chas, K8IJ, KY FISTS #8096: Great fun as usual. 40M wasn't great, but the Sprint was.

John, KA8MPT, OH FISTS #9552: The bands not too good to me in OH, just couldn't hear too many stations with my little G5RV up 25 ft and an HF9V vertical. Still the best club to learn CW.

Dan KB6NU, MI FISTS #9342:Band condx were not optimal, but good enough.....

Paul, KD2MX, NJ FISTS #12042: Conditions seemed pretty lousy making the sprint a bit of a struggle. Activity might've been off too. I did quite a bit better in February.

Don, KJ1D, NH FISTS #11561: Great time. Wish I could have spent more time at it.

Dick, KS0M, MO FISTS #3067:Band conditions were not the best. Nothing heard on 15 or 10 meters. I tried 40 meters and made 3 calls. It was very noisy with my vertical so I went QRT.I had fun and made more contacts than last time. I found that calling CQ got me the best results. But, only short runs. I will be back for the next one.

Kevin, N4ENC, NC FISTS #12050:First time for club operating a Sprint. Lots of fun. Thanks to all.

Leroy, N7EIE, WA FISTS #9926: Was able to operate most of the sprint, only 20 was open. CU this summer.

Mert, W0UFO, MN FISTS #3823: Thanks for a GREAT Sprint. My time was limited but had fun working old friends.

FISTS Club of North Carolina, W4FFF, NC FISTS #9700: Thanks to everyone who operated for making this a fun afternoon! 40m was quite good for us; 20m was pretty good; one QSO on 15m; 80m and 10m were dead. Looking forward to the Summer Sprint in July.

Eric, W4KPG, FL FISTS #10774: Had fun, looking forward to the summer sprint

Randy, W4XJ, VA FISTS #11762: Did not get to operate the whole time, but great fun!

Wayne, W5KDJ, TX FISTS #10060: Lots more folks on this time than were on the winter FISTS. Great contest and just wish props would open up. TS-480HX to 7 ele. yagi

Theodore, W5TB, TX FISTS #5365: I enjoyed operating a little of the contest using a Ten Tec Argo V @ 20W to a low dipole at in-law's house where I am lucky enough to have permanent shack status.

Rocky, W7RCK, OR FISTS #11018: A poor showing, but still fun!

Robert, W8YRB, KS FISTS #7436: Had a wonderful time, and met a lot of friends looking forward to the next one.

Louis, W9IL, IL FISTS #11187: Lousy band conditions but managed to eke out a few contacts between a multitude of unplanned interruptions. Participation seemed to be pretty low.

Ray, WB0PYF, MO FISTS #7986: Conditions were up and down, worked several old DX friends and many new fists members. Great time as always.

John, WB8RFB, IL FISTS #6844: Got a very late start but had fun making the few contacts that I did. Hope to be able to make it for the entire Fall Sprint. This is a fun event!

FISTS GOODIES

Patches, pins, stickers, travel mugs, t-shirts, sweatshirts, polo shirts

Patches - \$1.00 each

Lapel/Hat Pins - two styles - I "heart" CW and "FISTS CW Club" - \$1.50 each

Stickers - two styles - same as the pins - \$5 for 300 stickers of the same style

T-shirts - blue or black - "I'm proud to be a Know Code Ham" \$6

Sweatshirts - gray - \$11

Polo - short sleeve (no pocket) with FISTS Key logo embroidered on top left side - \$14

Travel mug - I "heart" CW \$5

Prices DO include postage - paypal accepted to fists@tir.com.

Be sure to specify sizes and colors.

FISTS AWARDS

By Dennis K6DF, Awards Manager

Award activity has been very slow over the past few months. Of course, the bands have not been all that good, so I am not very surprised at the drop in award applications.

KC0JKD is the first one to earn the 5 Million, Millionaire award. Congratulations!

Remember to send in a Dupe Sheet with all logs of over 100 QSO's.

Dupe Sheets for the Millionaire need to be separated by band as per the rules on the FISTS Awards web site. If you send in a log without a Dupe Sheet, it will be returned to you without being processed.

Remember to use the awards e-mail address, (fistsawards@comcast.net) for sending in your award logs. Please send in complete logs for awards. That means all of the following information: Call, Date of QSO, Band, FISTS Nr., Point/s claimed for each QSO. Incomplete logs, delay receiving your award certificate.

Please check the FISTS Web Page for additional information regarding current FISTS awards and how to apply for them: <http://www.fists.org/awards.html>

If you have any questions about the awards that are not answered on the FISTS awards web page, feel free to e-mail me with your questions.

Keep banging the brass . . . C U on the bands . . . 73, Dennis K6DF

AWARDS ISSUED - May 26, 2006 TO Aug 24, 2006

Basic Century Certificate (CC)

AD5WI

F2YT

G4ZPI

WB2MIC

K1LOG

K4FVN

WB5OJJ

K6TOB

WB7AVF

KB5VTB

KB7MBI

ZL3REX

KC0VRI

KC4KNN

KC8UR

W8LRD

WB0RHJ

Silver Century

AC9BP

K5YQF

KA2REY

KA8HFN

N7GEB

Gold Century

AC9BP
K5NT
KB1HSA
W4MJT
W7GVE
WQ9Z

3 Million

K0TC
K4UK
N3RSD
W5GXV
W7GVE
WB8MON

Diamond Century

W7DK
WE9N
ZL2SWR

4 Million

K4IA
W7GVE
WQ9Z

Platinum Award

K0LUW
K5YQF
W6RK
WB2MIC

5 Million

KC0JKD

Platinum 250 Award

K5NT
W7GVE
ZL2SWR

Worked All States (FISTS)

KG4YLZ
W4MJT
W7DK
W7GVE

Millionaire

AB1BW
AD5W
F2YT
G4LHI
K0LUW
KC8UR
KD0V
KE6OIO
KF4YP
WB2MIC

2 Million

K0LUW
KA8HFN



FISTS DOWN UNDER

Newsletter – September 2006

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Web site – (currently under development): **www.fistsdownunder.org**



SUGGESTED FISTS CLUB H/F CALLING FREQUENCIES

1.808kHz (160M) – 3528kHz (80M) – 7.028MHz (40M) – 10.118MHz (30M) – 14.058MHz (20M)
18.085MHz (17M) – 21.058MHz (15M) – 24.918MHz (12M) – 28.058MHz (10M)

Members are reminded that the above frequencies are suggested calling frequencies. If they are busy, it is suggested that once you establish contact with a station, it may be prudent to change frequency down the band, avoiding other calling frequencies of known clubs.

SILENT KEY

PETER PAVEY, VK3VB / G3NFT # FISTS 9071

It is with deep sadness that I belatedly report, that Peter became a silent key on 01 July 2006, aged 66. He is survived by his wife Patricia (VK3OZ # FISTS 9070) and children Paula, Patsy-Anne, Phil (VK3YB) and Peter.

Sincere Condolences on behalf of FISTS Down Under, have been sent to Pat and the family.
- Ralph, ZL2AOH. (Thanks John, VK4TJ for bringing this sad news to our attention).

NEW MEMBER

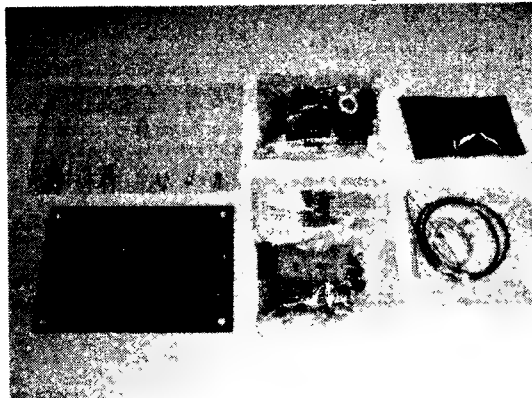
Our latest new member is **VK2CJC-Jack Cook #9666**. Jack resides in Coffs Harbour on the northern New South Wales Coast. Coffs Harbour is the centre of the banana-growing region of New South Wales – the home of the "Big Banana." Jacks personal profile appears later in this newsletter.

DOWN UNDER MEMBERS' NEWS

VK4JAZ-Grant #9635 reports that he has now received his SW40 kit from the US and has started building. He will let us know how this turns out. The accompanying picture is of the components as they arrived from the States. He concludes "I am now entirely QRP - how's that for a challenge?"

ZL2CD-Bill #9006 has written suggesting that we only issue the down under membership list every other month, to save paper. So with effect next month we will take up his suggestion for those members receiving newsletters through the postal system. If any remember still wishes to receive it monthly through the post, please let us know. E-mail recipients will continue to get the list monthly.

ZL3REX-Rex #9640 has recently been operating under the ZL national club call **ZL6FF #9600**. In reporting his latest haul Rex says that the bands have been down at times in the past month with no sign of the beacons and no responses to CQ on 40, 30 and 20 metres on many days. Thanks for your efforts Rex.



VK4BCM – Bevan #9053 will be holidaying in the United Kingdom for two months from early September. We have asked FISTS UK to help to find any FISTS members living close to his temporary QTH in Godalming, Surrey. Before his departure he sent a message about an interesting web site about Samuel Morse's last message. It can be seen at: <http://www.telegraph-history.org/samuel-morse/signature.html>

VK3CGB – Chris #9087 is another member visiting the United Kingdom shortly. He will spend about five weeks in the Sunderland/Durham area. Local FISTS have been notified and I'm sure he will be in for a big welcome!

ZL1VS – Bill #9603 whilst visiting Nigel, ZL2TX brought up the fact that he wanted to buy a KEYSER PADDLE. Discussion centred on the various makes available and ended with Bill borrowing one of Nigel's keys, namely a VIBROPLEX Paddle. Having found the switch on his rig to change from Semi-Automatic to Automatic he is now in full swing, keying both dots and dashes!

Once again FISTS members appeared prominently in contest results published in the July/August 2006 edition of Break In. One surprise entry was that of **VK3OZ-Pat #9071** who won the Overseas YLs section of the Thelma Souper Memorial Contest. **ZL1NI-Bryan #9647** topped the OMs section of the same contest.

Members have again been generous by including donations when renewing their subscriptions. Our thanks this month go to **ZL2AG - Frank # 9002**, **VK1LK – Ernie # 9608**, **VK4BCM – Bevan # 9053** and **VK6BT - Bob # 9611**.

OTHER MEMBERS' NEWS

KG9HV-John #1750 explains the difference between iambic modes A and B: The matter of iambic modes has always been confusing. It's a matter of how you want the keyer to behave when you are squeezing and releasing the keys. I will try to explain the difference between the two modes.

When a squeeze is released during an element (dit or dah), TYPE A just finishes the element in progress and doesn't produce a following alternate element. TYPE B on the other hand adds an opposite element at the end.

Examples:

In mode A iambic, a squeeze release during the "dah" in the letter A will produce "dit-dah" the letter A.

In mode B iambic, a squeeze release during a "dah" in the letter A will produce a "dit-dah-dit" which is R. The dit at the end was put in at the end by the keyer chip.

He concludes: I guess it is a matter of personal choice when it comes to iambic modes. Try both and see which one suits your fancy.

M0BPT-Robert #5576 writes: I'm responsible for "Brasspounder". This is what I do with the publication. On or around the 15th of the month, I upload the latest edition to www.m0bpt.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk if you want to download it and print it off you can do so.

If you wish to peruse previous editions, visit www.freewebs.com/m0bpt and read away. If you want to know when I upload the latest edition, send me your email address and I'll put you on my mailing list.

COAST-TO-COAST CONTEST – 2006

Don't forget that the annual FISTS Coast-to-Coast Contest will take place from 18:00 hrs UTC 30 September to 18:00 hrs UTC 1 October 2006. We are still looking for volunteers to man ZL6FF in this contest from Quartz Hill. For those that may be interested, there is sleeping accommodation available on site together with shower and cooking facilities. With the impending development of a wind farm on the site, this may be the last opportunity for ZL6FF to operate from there, for some time.

We hope that all four FISTS Down Under Clubs will join in. It's a good opportunity for FISTS worldwide to gain points towards the various FISTS Awards.

MORSE TRANSLATION PROGRAM

There is an interesting program located at <http://www.omnicron.com/~ford/java/Nmorse.html>.

There are random plain language quotations that translate into Morse signals, or you can write your own text for assisting the training of a new chum.

It enables you to test receiving at speeds from five to forty words per minute. – Something to while away the hours waiting for the bands to open.

PROFILES**REX HANDCOCK, ZL3REX # 9640**

Rex hails from Murchison in the South Island of New Zealand and by the sound of things has the Amateur's Dream location. He writes: - I have expanses of water to the East through North and West around to South, due to being close to the confluence of the Buller River (several large channels) and the Matakita River (quite large) as well as a number of wetland areas, much of the year. This I guess gives me some "Fresnal Zone" enhancement on many bands and indeed I am working many QRP Stations running anything from a few milli-watts to 5watts.

Recently I have been using the FISTS Club Call, ZL6FF to give many members points for their awards. I've come to using my own call sign for initial contacts and if the station is a FIST member I change "Hats" to ZL6FF for them. As often as not, more non - FISTS stations are worked so I don't change calls, as I really haven't time to reply to endless QSL mail. It is not uncommon when 80 Metres is open on Grey-Line to work around 30 Europeans in a string on Sideband from this QTH.

Rig is a Kenwood TS830S, average power around 100watts give or take a bit through a tuner and 25 metres of coaxial line routed through the house ceiling and out to a lightning arrestor board / earthing, then up a tower. One coaxial line feeds the 20 metre driven element of my homebrew 2 element compact quad, the other line feeding the 15 / 10 metre driven elements through a homebrew relay box using two relays for core and braid. The top of the 20 Metre Element - is about 45 ft high. On the other bands I have an 80 Metre loop at about 55ft high or 17 Metres + and a 160 metre vertical which I am still developing. It has 40 radials laid out under the loop and so far has given good results on this band all around New Zealand. The Tower, Rotator and Switching, is all home made from recycled - material.

(Rex - On behalf of members thanks for your efforts using ZL6FF - I'm sure you had fun giving out those points to the membership! - Ed)

JACK COOK, VK2CJC # 9666

I discovered my interest in radio at around the age of 10 in the late 1970s while living in my native Scotland.

My fathers Hobby is restoring second world war military vehicles so there was a collection of WW2 radio equipment lying around, which alerted me to the existence of short wave. This coincided with the sudden spread in popularity of CB radio and opened up the possibility of experiencing two-way radio equipment.

I was an avid reader of Practical Wireless magazine and planned to pass the radio amateur examination as soon as I was able. Being a teenager at the time, my attention was distracted by such interests, as motorcycles and fast cars and I didn't become an amateur radio operator until 1993, when I became GM7POK. This being a VHF only license I set out to pass the CW test and achieve my ultimate goal of operating HF. But life being hectic and time short, I just couldn't get my head round Morse code and two years later I opted to sit the 5wpm test to get the novice call-sign of 2M0AJW which allowed me on small sections of some HF bands, mainly within the CW sections and a maximum power of 3 watts PEP. Even so I joined in the 80 metre band novice QRS nets to get experience, but it still took me until 1997 to get my speed up to 12wpm to pass the test for a full license. I then became MM0AXL a call sign I still retain today even though I haven't lived in the UK for six years.

The CW test process proved to me that I was most definitely not a natural Morse operator. I promptly forgot the code in favour of SSB and data modes.

In early 2000 I moved to Coffs Harbour Australia and became VK2CJC. My fourth call sign, in seven years. Fortunately due to the reciprocal agreement between the two countries I didn't have to sit a CW test again. (Phew!)

Fast forward to early 2006 when I am in the pub with Dom VK2YDD. He says, "I'd like to learn Morse, but just cant get round to it". So I reply, "if you do it I'll do it too". This was the point I discovered that nine years of non-CW radio operation had completely erased my memory of the code. I could only remember a few characters. So I had to re-learn from scratch as if I was a complete beginner. A few months later Dom and I were having shaky 10wpm CW contacts on 80m.

I have confirmed to myself that I am still not a natural CW operator. In fact I wouldn't even say I'm as good as average. I have had comments on my good sending but I have to credit that to my Bencher paddle and MFJ memory keyer, which keeps my character spacing nicely in check.

But one thing I have recently discovered, "I really enjoy CW". I am on 3528KHz most evenings calling CQ at 10wpm, and now and again I even get a reply. I'm working towards a century award and hope my speed will slowly increase with perseverance. I know from my experience the first time round that may take a long time so I ask everyone to be patient. I'm trying as hard as I can.

So why didn't I "get into" CW the first time round? Two reasons come to mind.

1. I was forced to learn to get an HF license. Which immediately turned me off CW!
2. Nobody would slow down for me, not even when I asked stations to QRS!

This is no longer the case and I have found other CW ops to be very understanding and patient, with my slow progress. Perhaps newcomers to Morse are becoming rare now that CW has been dropped as a test requirement. In fact I've had a few shocked reactions, when I explained I am learning Morse!

So if you hear me calling, and can spare some time to drop the speed a little for a contact, I'd love to hear from you, and get a new Fists number in the log.

73 de Jack VK2CJC / MM0AXL Fists# 9666 (Contact details on QRZ.com)

(Keep up the good work Jack, you will find your speed will gradually improve with practice. There seem to be several hurdles in this game, namely around 10 WPM, then again at 18WPM. Don't be afraid to use QRS, our members are only too happy to oblige, as we've all been through it at one time or another - Ed)

THE ATTRACTION OF QRP

By Grant McDuling, VK4JAZ # 9635

There's something about QRP; just ask anyone smitten with the bug. And it's something quite addictive.

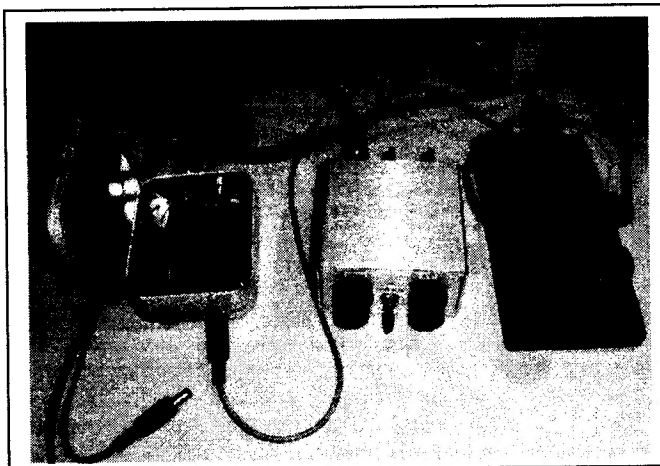
For one, it allows you to actually build and use a transmitter, all for just a hand full of dollars. I have built many, but perhaps the most sophisticated in my shack would have to be the RockMite 20.

Now I haven't actually succeeded in raking up quite as many QSOs as I'd have liked, mind you. And for very good reason, so I am told. The rig works fine, it's just that my QTH happens to be at the bottom of the world where CW ops are thin on the ground. In fact, people are thin on the ground here. This massive continent we call home, only has a total population of around 20 million. I guess that's about the size of the population in New York on a working day!

Any way, I have become rather addicted to my little QRP set-up. I have it hooked up to one of those other QRP marvels of the modern world; the NORCAL BLT Tuner. That feeds my miniscule 500mW signal into the Windom antenna up on my roof.

Every day without fail I put out a tentative CQ and wait ... and wait. Nothing. Now it's not that I haven't ever made a contact with the rig; I have. So I know it works. And being an active member of FISTS DOWN UNDER, I know I would be answered if I were being heard, because the FISTS members are a real fine business bunch of blokes who would never let my weak signals languish in the CW 'outback'. Some say it all has to do with the condition of the sun, and perhaps it has. And we all know, how harsh the sun can be to us antipodeans at the best of time, so I am not letting it get in the way of my CW work as well.

And to make things even more addictive, the key I use exclusively with this setup is a 100 year-old GPO straight key. It was first used - by my Uncle. He was a career telegraphist in the South African Navy. It has sentimental value. And the funny thing is, I am finding that the more I pound brass, the more sentimental my QRP setup is becoming.



500 kHz UPDATE

By Glenn Dunstan, VK4DU in WIA News

Over the past few months, National WIA News has reported moves by amateurs to secure an allocation in the vicinity of 500 kHz, the old maritime Morse code distress channel. Of course, the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System, or GMDSS replaced 500 kHz, in February 1999. Ships are no longer required to monitor or use 500 kHz for distress calls.

The ARRL, the RSGB and now the Irish amateur radio society have submitted proposals to their radio regulators for a small amateur allocation in the region of 500 kHz. The UK radio regulator has indicated that they are considering the issue. However, many former Merchant Navy radio officers are strongly opposed to amateur operation on 500 kHz. Their view is that 500 kHz must be preserved as a museum or historic frequency. The UK and the German radio officer associations have published papers to this effect.

So, what is the regulatory situation regarding 500 kHz?

At the moment, the international radio regulations still designate the band 495-505 kHz exclusively for distress and safety use. This status can only be changed by a world radio conference.

Interestingly, there are still some coast radio stations monitoring 500 kHz. In our region, Chinese and Indonesian stations maintain a distress and calling watch on 500.

So, in summary, there may be scope for a small experimental amateur allocation either above or below 500 kHz, but this could be some time off yet.

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PO Box 47, Hadley MI 48440

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Coming next month:

The story of the Belize DXpedition:

Over 2,000 straight key contacts made - hope you were one of them!

Please QSL via the FISTS Bureau.